

thank Ms. Bernice Brosious for 25 years of outstanding service to the United States government, most recently here in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Bernice began her career in government in 1979 at the General Services Administration. She followed that with service at the Defense Investigative Service, the Department of Agriculture, and the Federal Aviation Administration, honing her financial skills throughout this time. Bernice brought her expertise to the House in 1998 as Director of Accounting for the Chief Administrative Officer, and in 2001 became the Associate Administrator for Finance. Her passionate customer service, organizational knowledge and resourcefulness and her leadership on numerous initiatives have benefited countless Members and staff over the years.

Among her many other achievements, Bernice was instrumental in obtaining the House's first clean audit opinion for calendar year 1998 and for maintaining this clean opinion every year since. Over the past seven years Bernice has also been instrumental in moving the House from an ancient paper ledger accounting system to the imminent introduction of a 21st century state-of-the-art financial management system.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Bernice for her many years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish Bernice many wonderful years in fulfilling her retirement dreams.

IN HONOR OF THE COMMUNITY
ASSESSMENT PROJECT

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2004

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Community Assessment Project for working with United Way over the last 10 years and improving the quality of life for Santa Cruz County residents.

The Community Assessment Project brings together a wide range of public and private health, education, human service and civic organizations to design and implement a comprehensive 10-year plan for communities improvement. Some of the members of the Steering Committee who have worked exceptionally hard over this past decade are Carol Adams, from Dominican Hospital, and Susan Brutschy of Applied Survey Research. Additionally, much of this project's success has been due to the generous support of the financial sponsors, especially the County of Santa Cruz, the single largest patron.

In the last 10 years, the Community Assessment Project has made significant progress toward reaching their goal of improving the overall quality of life in Santa Cruz County. It has conducted an annual survey to get residents' perceptions of the issues, and has begun addressing concerns related to health care, primary education, and drug and alcohol use among youth. By quantifying the needs of the community, it is now easier to bring in millions of new dollars in grant funding.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate the Community Assessment Project on the tremendous work it has done over this past decade.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE TIMES-STANDARD

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2004

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Times-Standard, a newspaper that has dependably served the Humboldt County, California area since 1854. The only regional daily newspaper, the Times-Standard is a reliable source of national, State and local news for thousands of citizens of the North Coast of California.

First published in September, 1854, the Humboldt Times was the sole source of news and information for early residents of the community. In April, 1875, the Humboldt Standard began publication, joining the Humboldt Times in promoting the interests of the area. From the beginning, important stories appeared. In 1854, the first railroad in the area was incorporated; a steamer from San Francisco sank with substantial loss of lives in 1860; a month later a tragic massacre of members of the Wiyot Tribe; and in 1917 the heavy cruiser USS *Milwaukee*, trying to rescue a stranded submarine in thick fog, was beached near Eureka—a story that made international headlines.

Headquartered in Eureka, California, on June 1, 1967 the two newspapers combined to become the Times-Standard and provided improved access to information, community leadership, advertising and entertainment to local residents.

The Times-Standard is an invaluable resource for historians and educators. In the early days of European settlement, people came to northern California from Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland and the British Isles to farm, harvest timber and fish the Pacific Ocean. Workers came from Asia to take part in building and mining, giving a diverse population a role in the growth of the Nation. The newspapers chronicled the impact of this settlement on the native peoples of the area, including the Hupa, Yurok, Tolowa, Karuk, and Wiyot among others.

Under a single owner from 1941 to 1967, the newspaper was acquired by the Brush-Moore Group and was purchased later that year by Thomson Newspapers. In 1996, the Times-Standard became a member of MediaNews Corporation.

The newspaper has been a community champion for major issues facing the region and a leading forum for discussion and debate. It plays a significant role in the progress of the region. The Times-Standard remains committed to the improvement of the community it serves and is an indispensable source of accurate and comprehensive news to the citizens of our State.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize one of California's finest newspapers, the Times-Standard of Eureka, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

VETERANS HEALTH PROGRAMS
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of three important initiatives to improve the quality of services for our Nation's veterans—S. 2484; S. 2486 and H.R. 3936. Each of these measures improves crucial service provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for our brave men and women who served.

The VA is charged with carrying out President Abraham Lincoln's vision of America's veterans: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan." It is important that Congress follow in this tradition by providing the necessary support to the VA as the needs of our Nation's veterans continues to change. I urge my colleagues to provide that support by supporting these three bills.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act, S. 2484, will help retain and develop the quality professional staff needed to provide first-rate care to our veterans. It provides merit pay and other incentives to properly compensate the dedicated health care workers who care for our heroes.

The Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act, S. 2486, enhances the educational and housing opportunities available to our veterans. It expands the maximum contributions veterans can make for educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill and increases the maximum allowable home loan guarantees for which veterans are eligible. This bill recognizes the vital role these programs have played in both repaying the sacrifices made by our veterans and in fueling the economic development through improved education and housing for veterans in our workforce.

The Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act, H.R. 3936, authorizes the VA to construct an improved headquarters outside the Pentagon in order to better serve veterans and their families, and it provides assistance for homeless veterans.

As we enact these important measures, I am hopeful that the House leadership will soon consider the Discharged Combat Veterans Medical Care Extension Act, H.R. 4438. I introduced this bill to extend eligibility to veterans who served in recent hostilities for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness. This bill would be particularly helpful to veterans with symptoms similar to those resulting from exposure to Agent Orange and Gulf War Syndrome who are compelled to prove within two years of discharge that their injuries are directly combat-related or would otherwise lose these benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the United States has a long and proud history of caring for our veterans. These bills follow that tradition in helping ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs continues to meet our responsibilities to America's heroes. I urge my colleagues to support each of them and thank our veterans for their service and continued dedication to our Nation.